

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE  
REGIONAL OFFICE  
TERMINAL ISLAND  
SAN PEDRO, CALIFORNIA

November 28, 1956

PLEASE ADDRESS REPLY TO

AND REFER TO THIS FILE NO.

SW 40/801.1

Dear Mr. Anderson:

This is in reply to your letter of November 15, 1956, requesting information for use in connection with your research into the health of migratory farm laborers and the so-called "wetbacks" from Mexico.

Answers to the three specific questions in your letter are as follows:

1. SOUTHWEST REGION

70,490 total Mexican aliens apprehended fiscal year 1956 (July, 1955, thru June, 1956).

11,862 total Mexican aliens apprehended quarter (July, August and September, 1956).

4,207 total Mexican aliens apprehended October, 1956.

2. STATE OF CALIFORNIA

27,483 total Mexican aliens apprehended fiscal year 1956 (July, 1955, thru June, 1956).

4,386 total Mexican aliens apprehended quarter (July, August and September, 1956).

1,593 total Mexican aliens apprehended October, 1956.

3. MEXICAN ALIENS PROCESSED IN MONTH OF OCTOBER, 1956.

282 El Centro Sector (Calexico is included in this Sector)  
709 El Paso Sector  
328 Brownsville Sector

It is true that the influx of illegal aliens from Mexico now presents an entirely different situation from that two or three years ago. The number of Mexican aliens attempting to enter the United States illegally, as reflected by the numbers apprehended by the Border Patrol, increased greatly each year following recovery of this country from the depression of the early 1930's, and particularly following World War II. This situation continued until apprehensions of such aliens by the Border



Patrol in the Southwest Region reached the unprecedented figure of 95,310 in the month of May, 1954. It was obvious at that time that we were faced by full-scale invasion and, though peaceful in character, could rapidly change the economic condition and standard of living of many thousands of our people.

General Joseph M. Swing was appointed Commissioner of Immigration about this time and he took immediate and positive steps to eliminate this condition by strengthening the Border Patrol and instituting a drive against illegal aliens in the United States which rapidly improved the situation. By September of 1955 conditions had improved to the point that only 5,838 aliens were apprehended on the southern border who attempted to enter illegally or were found illegally in the United States. Control of the border was established and improved until by September of 1956 the number of such apprehensions decreased to 3,133. It will also be of interest to you to note that the character of aliens attempting to enter illegally from Mexico radically changed. For example, in 1954 the larger percentage of those arrested were persons who were essentially law abiding in their own country and had come to this country only for the purpose of finding employment, whereas the large majority of those now being apprehended are either criminals with long records, both in Mexico and in the United States, or hardened and defiant aliens who have repeatedly been guilty of violation of the immigration laws.

Efforts to improve control of the borders of this country continue and we hope attempts to enter the country illegally will continue to decline at the same ratio they have in the past year.

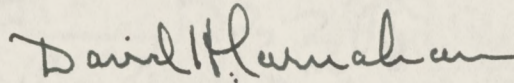
To provide necessary agricultural labor in this country where needed, the alien contract labor program was overhauled and made more effective. Today the Immigration and Naturalization Service in cooperation with the United States Employment Service and the Mexican Government provide importation of sufficient laborers from Mexico under contract and for specific length of time to handle agricultural crops where local labor is not available. These contract laborers are, of course, examined by the U. S. Public Health Service prior to entry to insure freedom from contagious disease. The program has been beneficial both to the economy of this country and that of Mexico.



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It is believed that this information will answer your questions in general and be of assistance to you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "David H. Carnahan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being more prominent and the last name "Carnahan" following in a similar style.

DAVID H. CARNAHAN,  
Regional Commissioner.

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